



## Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture

Date: March 4, 2021

Time: 7:00-9:00p

Location: Zoom

### Minutes

**Attending:** Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Tom Davison, Tom Formicola, Stewart Ikeda, Lidia Kenig-Scher, Beth Locke, Stephanie Marlin-Curiel, Sarah Morgan-Wu, Christine Noah, Andrea Nicolay, Steve Poltorzycki

**Absent:** Adria Arch, Christine Noah

**Guests:** Ali Carter, Nick Castellano (Grants Committee), Terry Holt

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm

### 1) ROLL CALL AND RULES OF REMOTE MEETINGS CONDUCTED DURING COVID-19

### 2) APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

- Minutes unanimously approved as amended

### 3) NOMINATIONS

- Stewart Ikeda is nominated for another two-year term as Co-Chair or ACAC. A roll call vote of the present Commissioners was conducted, with all voting in the affirmative. Stewart Ikeda was re-elected by unanimous agreement of the Commissioners present.

### 4) UPDATE FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

- Stewart gave a report back on the Fin Comm meeting. The Commission made the case for the importance of the arts in community development and presented over twenty letters of support. There were several glowing letters from participants about *Persistence*, the community- based project of crocheting plastic bags into sculpture with Artist-in-Residence, Michelle Lougee, and several from non-profits talking about the impactful work of the non-profit convenings.
- Steve Poltorzycki, Treasurer, was praised for an exemplary presentation. ACAC had been warned that we might face a 20% reduction this year, but instead were unanimously approved for \$30,000 this year.
- The Fin Comm requested the Commission's help in rebranding themselves and connecting with the community. They asked if they could participate in our non-profit volunteer activities and;/or work with us on an art project. Cecily suggested they could use an Artist-in-Residence. Fin Comm could also make a presentation to Artlinks. They have trouble recruiting members. John Ellis is planning to write a feature about why he joined the Finance Committee.

### 5) UPDATE ABOUT ARTICLE 35 ZONING REGULATIONS

- Ali Carter, Director of Economic Development, reported on a series of zoning recommendations that came out of an economic analysis of the industrial zones. There has been discussion about needing to have more commercial properties in order to have a split tax rate and charge more to commercial properties. There are only 91 industrial parcels in the whole town, .7% of parcels and 1.2 % of taxable acreage. There is not much land, but it is 69 properties and about 71 million in value. There is warehousing, storage, moving, landscaping. Most are owner-occupied.
- Arlington has a relatively small job base compared to the rest of Middlesex County that consists of a lower job base with low salaries held by people from out of town, but industrial zones yield

- higher-paying jobs. The increased value of the housing market is putting pressure on development.
- The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is trying to include environmentally sensitive measures and artist studios. They are looking for fewer cars and more bikes. There is so much pressure on the housing market but there is also the need for mixed-use development. DCPD is keeping artists' live-work space in the mix. It is unclear whether a two-thirds supermajority will be needed.
- Questions asked pertained to whether artists' mixed-use space would be allowed, if there could be tax incentives to attract this type of use, and whether zoning allows for building cultural spaces such as maker spaces, artist studios, and flexible space. Ali will follow up with specific answers to these questions.

## 6) SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- The DPCD is working on a long-term sustainable transportation plan. It was sent ahead for review and Ali asked if there were any comments. The only one was whether it could include artists on the planning and design teams. Ali indicated that it would vary by project.

## 7) NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

- Last year we had started talking to the Poet Laureate about special projects National Poetry month. We ended up landing on the Red Letter Poems for feasibility's sake, which turned out to be the perfect project during COVID. The poems have been sent out weekly for a year. Steven Ratiner, plans to continue the poems, but after the year mark, he will send them through his own email list and it will no longer be posted on the ACAC and Library websites.
- The question was raised as to whether the Poet Laureate was one of ACAC's programs. The answer is yes, because we fund it and we have a Commissioner on the Poet Laureate Committee. The Committee, however, is independent. We do feel it is within reason to ask Steven to share his email list and to ask people to sign up for the Arts Arlington newsletter. Lidia will talk to him about this.
- The library and Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA) is co-sponsoring a poetry open mic on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Local poets will be invited to perform.
- The Heights Haiku projects will have its first workshop during Poetry month. Cecily will send the listing to Anna Litten at the Library.

## 7) SPRING PROGRAM PLANNING

- Artlinks and ACA sent a survey was sent to artists to get a sense of people's comfort level with performing indoors. Though the survey was sent a number of times, only 10 artists responded. Artists feel comfortable participating online and in small gatherings. They will only do online gallery openings. They want to see more workshops to enhance their skill level and have exhibits in town they can share with people. As far as artist opportunities, they are looking for more murals, art in environment, reuse of objects instead of throwing away, and more public art. They loved Artlinks' recent artist-poetry collaboration and there is also lots of interest in outdoor events. They are looking to ACAC to be stewards of what they can accomplish during the pandemic time.

## 8) UPDATE FROM COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY TASK FORCE

- DPCD and ACAC are working together to be a bridge between the state regulations and what is available to people for planning performance outside right now, such as ACAC's Live Arts street performance programs. These guidelines will be brought to the health department before they are brought to the Select Board. The guidelines will then govern what we do and serve as guidelines for other organizations.

## 9) FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE UPDATE

- The MCC Cultural District Grant is focused on the Parklet orange barriers, utility box painting, performance in those areas. \$7500. Cecily is doing a call for artists for the orange barriers.
- ACAC received an LCC grant for \$1050 for the Arlington Heights Haiku project
- ACAC is working with the Chamber to do an appeal to 20-30 businesses to support the arts in the business districts. This is an opportunity to make an approach for first gifts. People who have

not been negatively impacted by COVID are looking for ways to help. The Chamber has also initiated a beautification Committee.

- The name of the appeal should be Sparkle Arlington or Sparkle Up Arlington.
- Christine Noah wrote a fabulous appeal letter
- The end of COVID is a great time to rebrand ourselves and focus on a thriving main street commercial district to attract new businesses to our empty storefronts.
- The focus is on participation at any level with suggested amounts, rather than having tiers of giving. Gifts of any amount are meaningful and will receive mention in press releases where appropriate, the Arts Arlington home page and newsletter, and social media.
- This appeal will follow ACA's appeal so as to give space between them and avoid confusion.
- Preliminary discussion about the Chairful fundraiser and when to hold it this year. Adria will come to a fundraising committee to talk about it.

**10) UPDATE FROM THE GRANTS COMMITTEE**

- The 2020 report to the MCC has been approved.
- For the 2021 year, \$34,543.00 were requested and \$17,774 granted
- 24 programs were funded. The largest grant was 1164.00 - True Story theatre  
The smallest grant was \$280 for hip hop for seniors
- This year, the grant guidelines specifically requested work that spoke to themes of diversity equity, access and inclusion. It is not clear that the number of programs on those themes increased from previous years.
- Tory Fair was one of the grantees. She has a very interesting project with a wheel, a frame and a camera that we should keep in mind in case it ties into any of our programs.

Meeting adjourned 8:52pm

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Marlin-Curiel

Next meeting: April 1, 7pm